



**Opening Statement of Control Arms - Ms. Sushmita Karki
11th Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty
Monday 25 August 2025**

I am honoured to deliver these opening remarks on behalf of the Control Arms Coalition — the civil society movement that championed the negotiation of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) — and now pushes for its universalization and to ensure its effective implementation and compliance.

I wish to begin by thanking the President, Ambassador Foradori, for his leadership in taking forward the work of the ATT over the past year, and to share our appreciation for your commitment to engaging youth in the ATT. It is essential that we encourage and invest in the next generation of diplomats, weapons experts, researchers, and advocates who will carry this work forward. As part of our commitment to youth engagement, this year's Control Arms Sponsorship Programme—generously supported by Canada and Switzerland—includes a delegation of young participants, and I'm proud to be among them.

Over the past two years, unprecedented numbers of young people around the world have taken to the streets to protest against the transfer of weapons to Israel. Therefore a pressing question for young people: What actions are ATT States Parties taking in response to the ongoing conflicts and the atrocities being committed in places such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Gaza, Myanmar, Sudan, Ukraine and Yemen?

And they are right to raise such questions, as the backdrop to this conference is grim.

One of the stated purposes of the ATT, as set out in Article 1, is to contribute to “international and regional peace, security and stability”. According to the Peace Research Institute Oslo, 2024 marked a historic peak in state-based conflicts, with 61 active conflicts across 36 countries – the highest number recorded since 1946. Today's conflicts are lasting longer and becoming increasingly entrenched. Yet the supply of weapons fuelling armed conflicts is seemingly limitless.

The second stated purpose of the ATT is to “reduce human suffering”. Today's conflicts are witnessing a surge in the number of civilians being killed. According to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, “[i]n 2024, civilian deaths in conflict rose 40%.” Further, OHCHR reports that, “[e]very 12 minutes, a civilian dies in armed conflict. Every 14 hours, a human rights defender, journalist or trade unionist is killed or disappeared.” These abuses share one common thread: that they are perpetrated using the very conventional weapons controlled under this Treaty.

All of this is unfolding at a time when humanitarian funding is in sharp decline. For those trapped in the crosshairs of armed conflict, access to life-saving assistance is far from guaranteed.



According to the [Global Humanitarian Assistance Report](#), international humanitarian assistance fell by 10% in 2024 - the largest-ever such reduction at nearly US\$5 billion.

In contrast, as reported by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, last year global military spending grew by US\$275 billion to reach \$2,7 trillion. Just the *increase* in military spending would cover the global humanitarian funding gap more than 55 times over.

The disparity in funding reflects the disparity in action. If States Parties upheld the object and purpose of this Treaty with the energy, determination, and efficiency with which they produce and procure arms, human suffering would unquestionably be reduced.

While there is much to despair, there is also a clear and simple course of action: ATT States Parties must rigorously implement and comply with Articles 6 and 7. Advancing implementation and compliance with the Treaty's core provisions is both urgent and essential: it offers a path to reduce the immense human suffering witnessed in today's conflicts, while also strengthening the international rules-based system in this moment of crisis.

The questions before us are clear: Will States Parties to the ATT rise to meet these challenges? Will this conference serve as a catalyst for meaningful collective action? And finally, will you leave behind a legacy that future generations can look to with pride?